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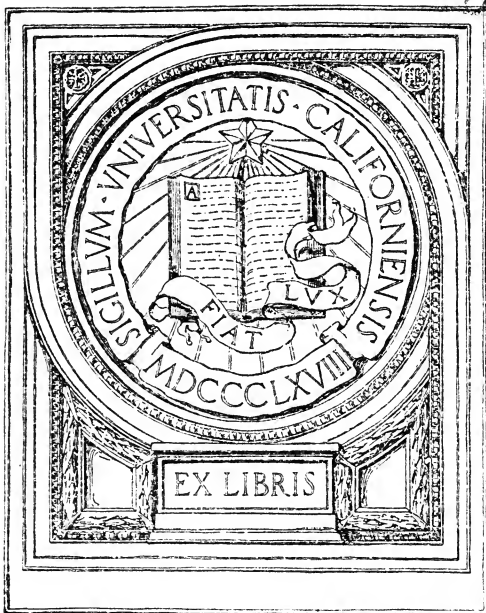
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BULLETIN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Serial No. 487: General Series, No. 321

EXTENSION DIVISION

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

DEBATING AND PUBLIC DISCUSSION

**THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE  
DEBATING**

(FOURTH EDITION)

PRICE, 15 CENTS

*Send all orders to*

***THE H. W. WILSON COMPANY***

***MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.***

MADISON

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**The University of Wisconsin**  
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**PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DEBATING**

*This manual was prepared for the Department of Debating and Public Discussion by Rollo L. Lyman, B. A., Associate Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory in The University of Wisconsin.*

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**INTRODUCTION**

The Extension Division of The University of Wisconsin maintains a department of Debating and Public Discussion. This department, and instructors of the department of Rhetoric and Oratory, desire to do all they can to further the interests of the various literary and debating organizations of the state. With this in view the University has already published several bulletins, some of which cover the general subjects of debating, while others furnish bibliographies and outlines for special topics of debate. On some of these questions material has been

collected by the department of Debating and Public Discussion, which can be loaned to Wisconsin organizations.

It is necessary to limit the assistance which can be promised to those questions and topics which are covered by the printed pamphlets. It will, therefore, be profitable for any debating society before choosing topics for debate to make inquiries as to what subjects have been investigated and upon what questions material can be loaned.

In a preceding pamphlet an effort has been made to offer suggestions as to the organization and procedure of debating societies. Methods of procedure for the first few meetings, a model constitution and by-laws, an outline of essential rules of order, and convenient table of motions in order of their rank are all contained in this pamphlet and may be useful to those who are planning to organize a new society. The purpose of the present bulletin is to discuss briefly the principles which underlie effective debating. First, there is set forth, the value of debating as a disciplinary study; second, suggestions as to the proper methods of investigation and of accumulating material for debate; third, an outline of the principles of analysis, evidence, and rebuttal fundamental in good debating.

The central purpose in all of this work done by the department, is to arouse interest in the discussion of public questions, especially among the young people of the state. "Tell me, said Goethe, "what your young men of twenty are thinking about, and I will tell you the future of the state." Very many of our public men believe that nothing could be done which would more effectually train the young citizens in civic and national affairs, than the formation and maintenance among them of a large number of active debating societies.



# I. EFFECTIVE DEBATING

## Disciplinary Value

The disciplinary value of debating may be discussed under four heads: 1. Training in self control; 2. Formation of correct habits of speech; 3. Organization of the power of thought; and, 4. Ability to recognize sound reasoning.

### I. TRAINING IN SELF CONTROL

A concrete instance will illustrate the discipline in self control. In Harvard College, three years ago, there was a 'varsity football player who desired to participate in an intercollegiate debate. He entered the contests through which the members of the 'varsity debating team were to be chosen. When his name was called to mount the platform in the first contest, this young man, who could dash fearlessly into a mass of Yale interference on the gridiron, was so overcome by nervousness that he fainted in the aisle and had to be carried from the room by his friends. He returned, however, revived by the fresh air, gritted his teeth, clenched his hands, ignored his trembling knees and blanched face, and by sheer will power, forced himself through the first contest. On through the tryouts he went, gaining courage, poise, self-reliance in each trial. Finally he was awarded a place on the Harvard team, which later won a decisive victory from Yale. The victory over Yale, though it may have been especially pleasing to a Harvard football man, was of comparatively little importance. The real value to him lay in his victory over himself. This young man, together with hundreds of others who have had similar experiences, will testify that the training he received in debating was of as great practical value to him as any other single detail of his education.

The real significance of training in the art of public debate becomes clear, when one considers the trend which modern education is taking. "Education," says someone, "is the organization of the power of behaving successfully, in view of differing emergencies." The emphasis of educators is being transferred from the acquisition of knowledge to the acquisition of the power of doing things. Not knowing, but acting, is of primary importance to young people who are to take an earnest

part in the world's activities. Education does not consist entirely nor primarily of what one carries away in the shape of knowledge. A large part of education is the power a man acquires over material things, and over himself, and his ability to mould or to change the opinions of his fellow men. Giving therefore, all due credit to those studies which open up the world of letters and science and learning, we still may safely claim a lasting value for a study of public speaking. Correctly followed out, this study teaches how to acquire self-confidence and control; how to make up one's own mind on public questions; how to give practical oral or written expressions to one's own constructive thinking. This, then, is the province, an honorable and useful one, of the study of public speaking: to teach a young man or woman how to think out a problem, and how to present it to meet the needs of other people.

## **2. FORMATION OF CORRECT HABITS OF SPEECH**

It is not especially necessary to emphasize here the secondary benefits which come from debating. Slovenly speech, imperfect articulation, inaccurate pronunciation, to say nothing of the faults of incorrect grammar and limited vocabulary, are defects which indicate usually a lack of culture. Youth is the time when these shortcomings should be corrected. The ability to speak clean, pure, finished English in a pleasing and confident manner is one of the greatest assets a man can possibly possess. A study which will insist that "for" is not "fer," that "government" is not "gov-er-munt," ought to have equal standing with another study which insists that "o" is not "e" in some word of a foreign language. The disciplinary value may be said to be equal, with the balance of practicability very largely on the study of English. Moreover, a boy who learns that a harsh, rasping voice, or a deep, bellowing voice, is a defect which he can by effort overcome, is gaining some valuable information. Again, a boy who tries repeatedly to conquer his trembling knees when standing before his classmates or society mates, who attempts to look them fearlessly in the eye, and to express to them clearly and forcefully his thoughts, such a boy is better fitted to face an employer with a request, or to ask a school board for a position, or to act as assistant counsel for some older lawyer. Youth is the time to acquire. Many a public man today laments the error of his youth, by which he failed to get control of his hands and feet, his facial muscles, and his vocal apparatus while he

was a boy with time for such matters, before he had by habit confirmed himself in his bad ways. Training in these essentials can be obtained in debating societies. In any town there are plenty of men and women who, when approached by young people asking aid, will gladly give their criticism and assistance.

### 3. ORGANIZATION OF THE POWER OF THOUGHT

But the greatest return from debating society work is in the power of thought. Professor Baker of Harvard insists that his public speaking courses are courses in constructive thinking. In other studies—language, mathematics, history—in the elementary studies at least, the main mental effort is in grasping the thoughts of other men. Only in the original research which characterizes the advanced stages of these subjects, is the power of originating thought largely developed. On the other hand, the essence of debating work is originating thought. A student is assigned a topic of local or state importance; he formulates his opinion after diligent research in all the sources of information open to him; he then places his ideas in such a way that others may grasp them. The fact that he has to act independent of instructor or textbook or formula, relying only on his own ingenuity and resource, develops in him the power of self-reliance in his thinking. Here, then, is the greatest value of our literary societies and of debating work.

This point may well receive concrete illustration. Suppose that immediately after the administration of President Roosevelt recognized the Republic of Panama, a student were asked to write an argument on the question: "Resolved that the recognition of the Republic of Panama was justified." He is told to look upon himself as an intelligent voter who wishes to know whether or not he should sanction the action of the administration. He goes to the sources of information, finds out the history of Panama, the previous relations between Columbia, Panama, and the United States. He studies the treaties which have bound these countries. Then he turns to the authorities on international law. He discovers the grounds on which recognition of a rebellious state is considered justifiable. He studies the precedents of recognition in the previous history of the United States. Then he turns to the official documents and other sources to find out exactly what was the provocation of Panama's revolt from Columbia; how strong the armies of the rebels and of the mother state were relatively; what the charac-

ter of the rebels was; what was the likelihood of Columbia's subduing the rebels, and similar facts. He then first takes the point of view of the supporters of the administration and formulates an outline of arguments in favor of the action of the administration, then from the viewpoint of the opponents of the administration he formulates an outline against the recognition. With the main contentions of both sides before him, he sees where the real clash in opinion lies. He determines which side has the preponderance of truth. He is now ready to argue. Believing firmly that the administration was or was not justified, as the case may be, he now arranges his thought in logical and sequential form. He masses his evidence on the essential issues in such a way as to demonstrate clearly the truth as he sees it. He is then told to consider the mental attitude of a man who holds the opposite view, and to rearrange and rephrase his argument so as to meet the prejudices, opinions, and preconceived ideas of the other man. If he has carried out all of these involved delicate processes, the student has grown in the power of research, in the power of constructive thinking, in the power of presentation. He has done much to organize the power of successful behavior in one difficult problem. He has learned something, depending on the fullness and ability of his work, of greater or lesser educational value.

#### **4. ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE SOUND REASONING**

There is another decided benefit to be derived from the study of debating; it teaches one to be on his guard while reading editorials or public letters, or while listening to any public speech. It enables one to cull out of public addresses those things which are not worthy of belief, and enables him to detect fallacious reasoning. The public have thrust upon them an incalculable number of public documents and addresses, only a few of which may be said to be sound. sane, sensible, convincing discussions of public questions. Too many people are unable to appreciate a sound argument when they hear it. Witness the thousands who are ready to follow political demagogues in every campaign. The young man who has learned to watch carefully his own reasoning is not apt blindly to accept the fallacious teaching of public leaders.

The advantages, then, of work along these lines, may be briefly summed up as follows: The student gains in self control, physical and mental. He learns, in his learning period, to articulate

and to pronounce accurately and to vocalize acceptably. He learns by practice how to acquire information on difficult subjects; how to formulate sound judgments upon which to rest his convictions. He acquires the ability to grasp the central issues in any problem; how to present the truth as he sees it, to other men. Finally, he has acquired the power of distinguishing between what is credible and what is not worthy of belief in all public discussions. This is the educational province of our debating work. It is worthy the effort of every teacher who desires to see his students grow in the power of "doing." Such work ought not to be neglected by any young man or woman in Wisconsin. In a hundred towns are public libraries which can furnish rooms for debating societies. Men and women who appreciate what this work can do for the state are needed to start such societies and by their continued interest to sustain them. That would be public service worth while.

## II. THE ARGUMENT (\*)

### ITS VALUE AS THE FUNDAMENTAL FORM OF PUBLIC ADDRESS.

Having thus set forth the value of debating, it is our purpose now to outline the essential principles of good argumentation as the form of all good public address. When a man argues, he attempts to make others see the truth as he sees it. He is presenting proof that his view is right. He must support his statements with proof that shall convince his hearers. But he must do more for he must present his evidence in such a way that his hearers, having been convinced, may feel an inclination to do

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(\*)The principles of effective argumentation are set forth in this section as they are taught by Professor Geo. P. Baker of Harvard College. Professor Baker's methods are closely followed by all teachers of argumentation. The most reliable textbooks are:

1. The Principles of Argumentation, Baker & Huntington, Ginn & Co.
2. Argumentation and Debating, Foster, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
3. Argumentation and Debate, Laycock and Scales, The Macmillan Company.
4. Briefs for Debate, Brookings & Ringwalt, Henry Holt & Co.
5. Forensic Oratory, Robinson.
6. Art of Debate, Alden, Henry Holt & Co.
7. Argumentation, Perry, American Book Company.

more than say, "Yes, the speaker is right." They must say, "Yes, he is right, let us do as he advises." He must arouse in his hearers a determination to act. It is far easier to convince a man that the policy of his political party is wrong, than it is to persuade him to change his vote from that party, if he has long adhered to it. The effective public speaker is not the one whose hearers are pleased with his beautiful voice, charmed by his delightful manner and entertained by his address. "You," said Demosthenes to his great rival orator, Aeschines, "You make them say 'how well he speaks.' I make them say, 'Let us march against Phillip.'" The effective debater must not be content with pleasing; his purpose in speaking is accomplished only when he actually produces a change in the actions of his audience. This is done by first convincing them that he is right, then by persuading them to act.

In this sense all public addresses are exactly like debating. Whether one is giving the truth to other minds in an after-dinner speech, in a legislative address, in a sermon, in a eulogy, or in any of the other forms of public address, in each and every one he must apply the same principles of conviction and persuasion which underlie sound argumentation. In short, the only distinction between the various forms of public address, is the adaptation of each to the particular circumstances under which it is delivered. It is high time that we discard the old idea that "Oratory" is to be distinguished from the other forms of public address. The orator of today, is the good debater; adapting himself and his subject, to differing occasions and various audiences. The orator is a man who presents a truth effectively. And to present a truth effectively, either in written or in oral discourse, one must know the principles which produce conviction and those which underlie persuasion. Hence in studying the

principles of effective argumentation, we study the fundamentals of all good public address.

### III. ARGUMENTATION

An effective argument is composed of three parts, an introduction, an argument proper, and a conclusion.

#### A. INTRODUCTION

The introduction is that part of the argument which cuts the whole case down to a few central or vital issues, upon which the decision of fair-minded men should rest. The good debater is not content to talk *on* the subject; he must go right to the heart of the case and discuss only the essentials. For instance, one debating the question, "Resolved, That immigration should be restricted by a literacy test," when he comes to debate finds himself grouping his arguments about the following central points.

- 1st. Have illiterate immigrants pauper and criminal tendencies?
- 2nd. Are illiterates hard to assimilate?
- 3rd. Do they lower the standard of American life?
- 4th. Can a literacy test be effectively applied?

#### Analysis

But these issues have not been chosen arbitrarily. They have been determined by a process of thought called analysis. It is this preliminary examination of the whole case, which results in the selection of a few central issues, which must be found in the introduction.

The various steps of analysis which precede good debating are five in number, (1) The origin of the question; (2) The definition of all doubtful terms; (3) The clash of arguments; (4) The exclusion of extraneous, admitted, or waived matter; (5) A clear statement of the central issues in the discussion.

#### 1. ORIGIN OF QUESTION—FIRST STEP IN ANALYSIS

The starting point of any argument lies in the real or in the alleged existence of a human need. Some evils are complained of. The first purpose of the argument is either to prove the ex-

istence or the nonexistence of those evils. If it be proved or admitted that evils exist it becomes the purpose of argument to show that a certain remedy will remove those evils. For instance, take the question of municipal ownership of gas plants. The first thing a debater should ask himself is, why are we discussing the question? He will find that citizens are complaining that private companies are charging too high rates for their gas and that the service rendered is poor. Before he can argue for municipal ownership or against it, he must show beyond doubt that the alleged evils do or do not exist as the case may be.

Take as another example the case of railway rate-making by a commission. The debater asks, what is the origin of this discussion? Why are people interested in it? He finds that justly or unjustly, people are complaining that railroads are charging too high rates, and are giving poor service. It is further alleged that railroads are giving rebates and discriminating rates, making it possible for large trusts to crush out competition. A disinterested, unprejudiced investigator insists upon first finding proof that these evils exist. If they do not exist, there is no debate. If proved to exist, then the question centers on the advisability of rate fixation by the proposed commission, as a means of removing existing evils.

In the question as to restriction of immigration by the literacy test, when the debater asks, why are we interested in this question he finds the following origin of the question:

1st. The volume of immigration has increased to over 1,000,000 a year.

2nd. These immigrants, largely from Southern Europe, are ignorant and illiterate.

3rd. Many consider illiterate immigrants undesirable in that:

- a. They have criminal and pauper tendencies.
- b. They crowd in cities and are hard to assimilate.
- c. They lower the standard of American life.

4th. Numerous bills have been introduced in Congress establishing a literacy test.

Thus, it is that the very first step for a debater to take is to answer for himself the questions: Why are we interested in this subject? Is there some evil admitted to exist, or alleged to exist? If this evil exists, is the proposed remedy satisfactory, or do some people object to it because another remedy is better?



## 2. DEFINITION OF TERMS—SECOND STEP IN ANALYSIS

The careful debater will next make certain that in his proposition there are no terms of doubtful meaning. If there are, he will at once make their meaning clear. An audience should know at once exactly what the program is for which a debater stands. For instance, suppose one is arguing the question, "*Resolved, That a commission should be given the power to fix railroad rates.*" Two terms at once need explicit definition. "A commission" is doubtful. The debater must carefully define the nature of the commission, the number of its members, the scope of its other powers, etc. Then, what is this power of "fixing rates"? In a recent Wisconsin-Michigan University debate each team had a different interpretation for this term. Wisconsin contended that "fixing rates" meant the substitution of a definite rate, for the rate complained of. Michigan argued that "fixing rates" meant the substitution, not of a definite rate, but of a maximum rate. Michigan showed that the Wisconsin interpretation was based on the Esche-Townsend bill of 1904, two years old, while their interpretation was based on the Dolliver bill of 1906. In two years the meaning of the term "rate fixation" had been changed. Thus it is that in the history and development of the discussion lies the best method of defining all doubtful terms.

Another illustration will show how easy it is for a debate to go astray, by a failure of the debaters to get the same meaning of terms. In the annual "joint debate" of 1905 between two of the leading literary societies of The University of Wisconsin, the question was, "*Resolved, That a system of compulsory workingmen's insurance should be established in the United States.*" At the close of the debate certain people were heard to complain that the two teams had been discussing entirely different meanings of the term "compulsory insurance." Athenæ seemed to insist that "compulsory insurance" meant that the employers should be compelled to insure their laborers; while Philomathia seemed to insist that the term meant that workingmen should be compelled to insure themselves. If the two sides did actually cling to these different meanings, there really was no debate. If the opponents are not talking for and against the same program there is no debate.

Take the question of restricting immigration by a literacy test. Evidently it is important that opponents discuss the same mean-

ing of "literacy test." The thing to do is to find out what provisions of exclusion are found in existing laws. It will be discovered that the present immigration laws exclude all idiots, insane persons, paupers, or persons suffering from a loathsome or contagious disease, persons who have been convicted of felony or other infamous crime or misdemeanor involving moral turpitude, polygamists, persons known to possess anarchistic views, and also any person whose ticket or passage is paid for with the money of another or who is assisted by others to come, unless it is affirmatively and satisfactorily shown that such person does not belong to one of the foregoing classes, or to the class of contract laborers. All such classes brought to this country, together with those who shall become public charges within two years, shall be returned at the expense of the steamship company, or the person or persons bringing them. Dependents upon a qualified immigrant include his wife, minor children, and grandchildren having no other support, his parents and grandparents unable to support themselves.

If the present laws contain these provisions, the next thing to be determined is what the last bill, passed by Congress in 1896 and vetoed by President Cleveland, proposed as the literacy test. After examining this law the investigator finds that he is debating the advisability of requiring all immigrants over sixteen years of age to be able to read and write in their own language. If, therefore, he finds his opponents arguing on a test which requires all adult immigrants to read the English language, it is easy for him to show that they, not he, are arguing beside the point. His definition of the doubtful term stands, because it has the authority of Congress behind it.

### **3. CLASH OF ARGUMENTS—THIRD STEP IN ANALYSIS**

Another indispensable step in the good preparation of a debate is technically called the "clash of arguments." This means a careful balancing over against each other of the leading arguments on both sides of the question. Young students most frequently go astray, by disregarding the other side entirely in the preparation of a debate. In reality it is even more important to know the opponents strong arguments and be prepared to meet them, than it is to know one's own case. A young debater, or an older one for that matter, can do nothing better than to take two sheets of paper: upon one list place the strongest arguments for the affirmative; upon the other place in

logical order the arguments of the negative—then placing the two papers side by side he can tell where the real vital difference in opinion lies. The issues in the debate, the points which he must prove in his constructive case, and those which he must disprove in refutation will appear in this “clash in opinion.” Upon the fullness and accuracy with which he sees the strength of each side, will his analysis cut the case down to the real issues.

The following illustration shows how a young debater can well work out the clash in opinion, on the question, “Should the elective system be adopted in the High Schools of the United States?”<sup>1</sup>

#### AFFIRMATIVE CONTENTIONS

The elective system should be adopted, for

1st. Each high school pupil is better able to choose for himself than are the school authorities for all, for

- a. There are no studies essential for all.
- b. Pupils do not seriously neglect the studies most often called essential.
- c. There are many safeguards which inhibit foolish elections.

2nd. No other plan is as satisfactory as the elective system, for

- a. The group system is too rigid.
- b. A partially elective system is insufficient.

3rd. The elective system is superior because it stimulates teachers to do better work.

#### NEGATIVE CONTENTIONS

The elective system should not be adopted for

1st. Those in charge of public high schools can choose better for all than can each pupil for himself, for

- a. There are certain studies essential for all pupils.
- b. Pupils do not elect these studies.
- c. Pupils will choose foolishly.

2nd. There are compromises superior to the elective system.

- a. The group system is superior.
- b. A partially prescribed system is superior.

3rd. The elective system is objectionable because it prompts teachers to make their courses easy.

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<sup>1</sup>Argumentation and Debating. Foster, page 44. Houghton, Mifflin Co.

4th. The elective system is strongest for building character, because it honors the will and trains in free choice.

4th. The prescribed system is of greater moral worth because it enforces disagreeable tasks.

Once more take the question of "literacy test." Suppose one is called upon to support the affirmative. It is well for him to make out a list of his essential arguments. Then placing opposite this list a blank sheet, write out the counter arguments which a skillful opponent will make.

The affirmative maintain that illiterate immigrants should be excluded because:

- 1st. The volume of immigration interferes with American laborers.
- 2nd. Illiterate immigrants are very likely to become public burdens.
- 3rd. Illiterate immigrants aggravate the slum evil.
- 4th. Illiterate immigrants lower the standard of life among Americans.
- 5th. The literacy test will help in enforcing present restrictive laws.

The negative oppose the exclusion of illiterate immigrants because:

- 1st. The present volume of immigration is needed for a labor supply.
- 2nd. The illiteracy test is not a just test.
  - a. It is a test of opportunity only in Europe.
  - b. Illiterate immigrants do not as a class become criminals or paupers.
  - c. The illiteracy test shuts out a great number of desirable men in order to shut out a few undesirables.
  - d. Illiterate immigrants do not as a class increase slum evils.
- 3rd. The test will not be effective because it will be evaded.
  - a. It will be only a temporary barrier.
  - b. It will prevent coöperation with Canada and Mexico.

4th. If there are evils connected with illiteracy among immigrants, these will be remedied by recent legislation providing:

- a. Distribution bureaus.
- b. Increase of probationary period from one to two years.

The clash in opinion, then, is extremely useful, in showing exactly where the difference in argument lies. In the immigration question, it will be seen that some arguments clash vitally; upon these issues, then, it is more than likely that the real debate will turn.

#### **4. EXCLUSION OF EXTRANEOUS, ADMITTED, OR GRANTED MATTER**

This is called the fourth step in analysis. In the public discussion of almost any question the careful thinker finds much matter which seems extraneous to the real issues. Most questions of economics or politics are intimately associated with many other questions. To disregard all side issues is absolutely necessary. In the railway rate question the poor debater may waste half his time arguing about "over capitalization" of railroads, not seeing that this matter is usually admitted even by those who oppose rate regulation. If not admitted, it can be shown to have vital connection only with the question of high rates, being entirely extraneous to the issues of discrimination of rates and rebating, which are the most important issues.

Moreover, in almost every subject there are certain arguments which cannot be disputed. These are classed as "admitted matter." In the Nebraska-Wisconsin inter-collegiate debate of 1905, Nebraska argued for fifteen minutes, proving that accidents on railroads are increasing in the United States at an alarming rate. They found themselves in the uncomfortable position of having wasted fifteen minutes, for Wisconsin admitted at once that accidents are increasing, preparing to argue that the method of relieving this evil suggested by Nebraska was inadvisable. Careful analysis will prevent just such waste of time.

Again, an argument closely connected with the question may be voluntarily passed by, in order to treat adequately certain more important issues. In the railway rate discussion, the personnel of the commission which is to fix rates, and the expense of maintaining it are certainly closely associated with the case, and in an exhaustive treatment of the subject would have to be taken up. However, many a good debater would waive these questions, yield a point, in order to devote his time to the real issues discriminating rates and rebates,

Examine the clash in opinion on the immigration question (page 18). Observe that the affirmative argument "5. Literacy test will help in enforcing present restrictive laws," may well be eliminated from the issues, because it is extraneous to the real discussion. So in almost every debate, there are a large number of more or less pertinent arguments which bear upon the topic, but which do not touch the vital issues. These side arguments, a skillful debater will avoid, by carefully eliminating them from the debate in his preliminary analysis.

## **5. STATEMENT OF SPECIAL ISSUES—LAST STEP IN ANALYSIS**

We hope that it has been made plain that all these various steps of analysis are work preliminary to good debating and that they must be taken by a careful debater after he has acquired all the information possible on his subject. After studying the origin of the question, making clear and sure the meanings of terms, examining carefully the case of the other side, rigorously excluding all matters which may be omitted from the discussion, the debater should have left the center, the heart, the vital issue in the case. These we may call special issues. It is well to state these to one's self in the form of questions, for instance: (1) Are the railroads really granting rebates today? (2) Can the Elkins law be enforced to stop them? (3) Could a commission charge one rate without seriously disturbing a large number of other rates? etc.

The main issues resulting from the clash of opinion on page 16, are given as follows:\*

- 1st. Can each high school pupil choose better for himself or can the school authorities choose better for all? (Which depends on the subordinate issues?)

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\* Argumentation and Debating: Foster, page 44. Houghton. Mifflin Co.

- a. Are any studies essential for all high school pupils?
  - b. Will pupils with free choice seriously neglect these studies?
  - c. Are the safeguards of the elective system sufficient to prevent foolish choices?
- 2nd. Is any other plan as satisfactory as complete election?
- a. Is the group system satisfactory?
  - b. Is the system of partial elections as satisfactory?
- 3rd. Is the elective system superior to any other in its effect on teachers?
- 4th. Do the moral benefits of free choice claimed for the elective system outweigh the moral benefits of drudgery claimed for the prescribed system?

The main issues in the restriction of immigration question seem to be as follows:†

- 1st. Does the present volume of immigration of illiterates seriously interfere with American labor?
- 2nd. Have illiterates, pauper and criminal tendencies?
- 3rd. Are they hard to assimilate?
- 4th. Do they lower the American standard of living?
- 5th. Can the test be made effective?
- 6th. Is recent legislation, having no literacy test, sufficient to remedy existing evils of immigration?

The first part of an argument, then, the introduction, should contain enough of this process of analysis, to show the audience why the issues, chosen by the debater, are the correct ones. The various steps of analysis given above are: (1) The origin of the question: (2) Definition of doubtful terms: (3) Clash of arguments: (4) Exclusion of extraneous, admitted, or waived matter; and (5) A clear statement of the central issues. These various steps represent processes of thought, through which all careful thinkers go, before they determine what the central ideas of their address shall be. Not all of the steps of analysis need appear in the actual debate, but not one step can safely be omitted from the preliminary thinking of the debater. No better advice can be given to any student of public address, than to tell him to analyze his question thoroughly, before starting to write his speech, to choose a very few points, not over three or four. Being sure that these are the vital issues, let him mass his evidence and argument around them. Thus it is that the purpose of the introduction is simply to get ready to debate. The debate itself is left to the second part of the argument, the argument proper.

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† See Clash in Opinion, Page 18.

## B. ARGUMENT PROPER

### ARRANGEMENT OF PROPOSITION

The second division of a well constructed argument is the argument proper. Having found the special issues and made them clear to the audience, the debater now proceeds to take them up one at a time and to present his evidence upon them. Suppose that one who is debating the literacy test for immigration had determined upon the issues as given on page 21. Let him now take six sheets of paper, upon the top of each one of which, let him write a proposition which shall correspond with his view of one of the special issues. He will then, supposing him to be on the negative, have six sheets of papers, headed separately as follows;

- 1st. The present immigration does not seriously interfere with American labor.
- 2nd. Illiterate immigrants do not have alarming criminal and pauper tendencies.
- 3rd. The immigrants concerned are not hard to assimilate.
- 4th. Illiterate immigrants do not seriously lower the American standard of living.
- 5th. The illiteracy test will not be effective.
- 6th. Recent legislation, without a literacy test, will go far toward relieving present conditions.

It is perfectly evident that if these negative contentions can be established convincingly, the affirmative will have little ground to stand upon. Now it must be kept in mind that it is not effective debating, merely to *talk about* these points for the allotted time. Each proposition must be proved. The careful debater will know accurately just how much effective evidence he has at his disposal on each point. He will have determined before the debate just what is the best order and arrangement in which to present his proof. The best way to accomplish this is to take each one of the six sheets of paper, and tabulate, classify, and arrange on it all the evidence which is appropriate. For example, his first sheet may read as follows:

The literacy test will not be effective, for

- 1st. It will be evaded by smuggling over the border, for
  - a. It is impossible to guard 3,500 miles of border line.
  - b. Authorities point out that even present laws are evaded in this manner.



1. Commissioner of Immigration, 1899-1900.
  2. Investigation Commission of 1892.
  - c. Chinese law effective until recently when steamer lines began to go to Mexico, because Canada shut out Chinese.
- 2nd. Canada will not coöperate in any immigration restrictions if we insist on this restriction, for
- a. Canada wants settlers.
  - b. Canada was ready to agree to treaty some years ago that was more moderate.
- 3rd. Test will not be effective in shutting out undesirable nationalities.
- a. It shuts out only a part of the Italians, etc.
  - b. Italians, etc., are fast learning to read and write.
  - c. Only effective legislation is to legislate direct.

His second sheet may read thus:

Illiterate immigrants do not have alarming criminal and pauper tendencies, for

- 1st. Illiterate immigrants do not become public charges as proved by
  - a. Statistics of New York City which show:
    1. Italians are only .65 per cent paupers, 1.4 per cent of workhouse inmates, 2.5 per cent convicts in the city.
    2. English with same population have 4.4 per cent paupers, 4.4 per cent workhouse inmates, 3.3 per cent convicts.
  - b. Statistics in Census of 1890, which show:
    1. Germans in the United States have per million population, 2436 paupers, 1065 prisoners.
    2. The Poles have only 1486 paupers per million population.
    3. English, 2163 paupers per million population.
    4. Italians, 817 paupers per million population.
    5. Portuguese, the most illiterate of all, have the lowest crime rate.

- 2nd. Literacy test shuts out 21 per cent of the foreign born criminals, but lets in 79 per cent.

It shuts out 1000 illiterate men in order to exclude three prisoners and eight paupers.

3rd. Illiterates do not swell slums, because:

- a. Illiterate foreigners are 12.4 per cent of the population of the country, while only 9.34 per cent are in cities of 25,000.
- b. Thirty-eight per cent of illiterate foreigners over 15 years of age are in cities of 25,000.
- c. Forty-eight per cent of literate foreigners over 15 years of age are in cities of 25,000.

4th. Illiterate nationalities, not inferior races, because:

- a. Their history proves them worthy.
- b. They improve in America.
- c. The present feeling is only the customary prejudice.
- d. They are developing peoples.

## **2. EVIDENCE**

As has been said above, the real effectiveness of the debate depends upon the convincingness of the proof, which is presented upon the essential issues. No one, therefore, can hope to be an efficient debater, who is ignorant of the essential principles which govern the handling of evidence. He must know (a) how to find evidence, (b) how to value evidence, (c) how to present evidence.

### **1st. How To Find Evidence**

Where can I get suggestions? How can I acquire information and evidence? These are questions, which every young debater and many older ones, are continually asking.

When questions of public policy, such as are usually debated, are put before the average young person he commonly finds himself at a loss for reasons by which to justify a position on one side of them or the other. He sees none of the ramifications of the subject, does not perceive its precise adjustment to other subjects which must be considered with or separated from it, and does not appreciate, consequently, the re-adjustments involved in the changes proposed or resisted.

The would-be-debater must get into contact with the facts that bear upon the question. The statesman who frames laws and votes upon them, may act first upon a general impression gained from personal experience. But personal impressions are notoriously narrow, biased, and incorrect, so the government of the United States, the government of each state, and many cities and municipalities have experts which in the aggregate number in

the tens of thousands, employed to compile the laws, to tabulate and interpret the statistics, and to investigate and devise remedies for the abuses in connection with a multitude of subjects of public importance. Upon the reports of these experts the statesman puts his main reliance. Any citizen of this nation has exactly the same access to the facts presented in these reports as the legislator. These government reports are legion in number. Many of them are veritable mines of information. While they are not scattered broadcast over the country, they are distributed free wherever it seems that some worthy end may be accomplished. To facilitate the access of the public to the information thus published, the United States Superintendent of Public Documents, issues at the close of every Congress a catalogue naming and describing each government document that has been published during the past two years. This catalogue, entitled, "Catalogue of the Public Documents of the —th Congress" may be obtained from the Superintendent, by any public library, either upon the request of the librarian or upon such request fortified by the influence of a congressman. This catalogue is issued as a monthly pamphlet as well, and may be obtained regularly in the same manner. The documents described in these catalogues may be obtained in the same manner as the catalogue itself. The document of greatest importance is the United States Census. It is the one great source of statistics, and a complete set should be in every library if debating is to be fostered in the community.

In the state of Wisconsin, volumes of statistics are compiled yearly. No catalogue of these volumes is published, but the familiar Blue Book will show the different departments, bureaus, and commissions connected with the state government. Each of these publishes a report at least once in two years, and a request addressed to the head of any department will always secure the report as long as the supply lasts. City reports may be secured similarly, whenever they are published.

Next to these official documents in importance, as a stimulant to original thought, and as a source of facts, are the writings of interested men in magazines and newspapers. Poole's Index, the Cumulative Index, the Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature, are catalogues of the articles appearing in the issues of all general periodicals. One of these guides is sure to be found in any library that takes any number of magazines. If the question for discussion be a current topic, a close reading of the newspapers and a clipping of the data which appears, will give a surprising amount of information.

The Gleaner's Library of Beloit, Wisconsin, saves clippings on all the current subjects, and lends them for a small charge. This library affords the easiest and quickest means, perhaps, of getting newspaper opinion.

The H. W. Wilson Co., Minneapolis, Minnesota, have also a large collection of useful material for debaters which it lends for a small fee.

Sooner or later, in the study of almost any question, one will discover some society for the prevention or promulgation, restriction or encouragement of something or other connected with the question. These societies are always glad to furnish their partisan literature. In every high school library there should be found one of the following books:

1. Brookings & Ringwalt: Briefs for Debate. Longmans, Green & Co., New York.

2. Askew: Pros and Cons. Swan, Sonnenschein & Co. Paternoster Square, London.

3. Matson: References for Library Workers. A. C. McClurg & Co., 215-221 Wabash Ave., Chicago.

It is not our purpose to commend a slavish copying of the outlines of argument which they contain. Their purpose is to serve merely as models, but the bibliographies that are subjoined are of prime usefulness, being well selected, pointed, comprehensive, and above all, ready made.

The University Extension Division of The University of Wisconsin will aid debaters in Wisconsin to find how and where to obtain helpful material for study and reference by gift, loan, or rent. In this work it will have the aid and coöperation of the University Library and the Legislative Reference Department of the Wisconsin Free Library Commission. The rules under which material will be lent may be found in the General Statement Bulletin, which may be secured upon application to the University Extension Division, The University of Wisconsin.

With these sources of material in mind, it is now in point to indicate some method of study. If the subject for debate is of a nature purely local, interviews of men representative of either side, with a close reading of the local newspapers, will take the place of the course of study about to be outlined. If the question is of general interest, however, it seems best to begin work by reading magazine articles so as to get a general impression of the scope of the question; of the meaning of the terms used in the various points of view from which it may be looked upon.

Many debaters of standing take no notes except upon facts palpably necessary during this general reading, wishing to gain simply a general impression and grasp of the subject. Later, however, they take down striking expressions, strong paragraphs, and suggestive facts and arguments. They never crib the language of the articles; they may quote it, giving the credit to whom it belongs, but more especially they mean to use these strong expressions as models for their own efforts, and as a means of charging themselves with the indispensable high potential of feeling upon the subject. The careful note-taker always takes down the pages and volume from which his reference is taken in order that he may refer to the setting in which it was found.

From this general reading, however, some confusion of mind will generally result, from the multiplicity of ideas. The student should now be able to draw up the Origin of the Question (see p. 13), define the terms (*Ibid.*), outline the Clash of Opinion (*Ibid.*) and determine the special issues.

The student should not read all his magazine references first; a few should be read as already indicated, the rest in connection with and as an interpretation of the more scientific treatises, such as the government reports, scientific publications, and the Census statistics which he will read after making out the brief already described. These last mentioned sources should be the main reliance of the debater in securing the evidence and formulating his argument. The facts stated in these are first hand information and the opinions stated are unbiased by private interest. Upon this solid ground let his argument be builded.

## **2nd. How to Value Evidence**

There are two kinds of evidence which a debater must know how to distinguish.

- a. *Testimonial evidence* is that which is drawn from the opinions of authorities, or the direct statements of fact by witnesses.
- b. *Circumstantial evidence* consists of inferences drawn from facts; in other words it consists of reasoning about facts.

The distinction between the two kinds of evidence is well brought out by Professor Huxley in the following illustration:

“Let us suppose that several boys go to a pool of water to swim. One of these is seen by his companions to dive into the

water and he does not arise. His death is reported. This is called testimonial evidence. The boy was seen to drown, you are told, and your judgment concedes the fact readily. But is the proposition proved? \* \* \* The authorities, later, drag the pool and find a body. The body is taken to the morgue, and the keeper there, an expert on such matters, makes the startling assertion that, instead of a few hours, the body must have been immersed for several days. He concludes this from circumstantial evidence. The keeper has no positive knowledge that this particular body has been under water so long. Still he has seen thousands of bodies and none has presented such an appearance after so short a period." \* \* \* In the first instance the statement of the boys is testimonial evidence, sometimes called direct evidence. In the second instance the reasoning drawn from the fact as to the appearance of the body, is circumstantial evidence, sometimes called indirect evidence.

*a. How to value testimonial evidence.*

If a witness testifies that illiterate immigrants in the city of New York tend to become paupers, how much belief shall one give to his statement? Evidently the value of his affirmation depends on four things.

*a.* Is the witness an expert or an authority on the subject of immigration?

A debater must always be sure that his hearers are willing to accept the statements of his authorities as worthy of belief. A man may be an authority on one subject, say the management of street railways, and know practically nothing about immigration. If a United States Commissioner of Immigration witnesses as to the effect of illiterate immigration, his testimony is ordinarily more valuable than that of an unknown slum worker; but the slum worker's statement is often more worthy of acceptance than that of the pastor of a wealthy city church; the pastor's statement ordinarily would be more valuable than the affirmation of a business man of Wall street. Thus in every case the debater must carefully determine the right and the ability of his witness to testify. On almost every subject it is possible to find witnesses who give directly opposing testimony. Evidently that debater is stronger, who makes his audience feel that his witness is more credible.

*b.* Is the witness honest? Is he prejudiced?

Secretary Taft applied this test to the evidence given by a certain Tracy Robinson, a citizen of Colon, who had made damaging assertions concerning the work of the United States government in Panama. "His animus against the government is because it devoted its first attention to the expenditure of money in Panama, and thus raised the value of property in that city; and secondly, that in the enforcement of health regulations by the sanitary department in Colon, he found it necessary to complain that his vested rights were being interfered with. He was willing to have sanitary regulations enforced against his neighbors." Evidently the statements of a man so prejudiced against the United States government, must be accepted with reservation. Another interesting illustration is afforded by the two conflicting statements of two rival newspapers each reporting one of the speeches of Senator La Follette in the United States Senate. One paper supports, the other opposes, Senator La Follette.

He had a splendid audience, *especially* in the galleries. Here was, in the front row, Mr. and Mrs. Rowe, a former law partner of La Follette, Lincoln Steffens, and the La-Follette children. Senators gave only indifferent attention to the speech.

The galleries were thronged long before the hour for the Wisconsin man to begin. The corridors were packed, with people who waited, many of them, three hours in the hope of getting inside. The seats of the Republican senators who left were taken by members of the House. Democratic senators gave close attention.

c. Is the testimony consistent with other known facts? Is it consistent with itself?

For instance, it is contrary to all human experience that a gentle, timid, kindly, old woman should commit a revolting murder. Again, if A testified that he saw a blow struck with a sharp edged weapon, and it is proved that the wound must have been made by a blunt club, A's testimony is inconsistent with known facts, and must be discredited. Again, to be valuable, testimonial evidence must be consistent with itself. If a witness can be shown to give contradictory evidence, he is largely discredited.

d. Under what conditions and circumstances was the testimony given?

Was the evidence given freely or under compulsion? If a man accused of wrong is compelled to testify against his will, he has incentive to lie. If he is evidently trying to assist investigators to find the truth, if he willingly presents his records and his books, his statements are more open to belief.

Secretary Taft thus applied this test to the statements of a magazine article, the writer of which stayed only twenty-eight hours in Panama. "Assuming that after landing and docking, the writer at once began work, it is not unfair to say that his opportunities for observation were limited to twenty-eight hours, including day time and night time. It would seem not to be a long period in which to look into and determine the character of engineering difficulties of the greatest constructive enterprise yet undertaken by man."

*b. How to value circumstantial evidence*

There are three common forms of circumstantial evidence:

a. Generalization.

b. Argument from casual relation.

c. The argument from resemblance.

a. Generalization is made when a general conclusion is based upon the observation of many instances. For instance, the morgue keeper, referred to in the illustration on page 27, having examined thousands of drowned people, has observed that several days under water produces a similar appearance in all bodies. This is generalization. If a witness testifies that illiterate immigrants become paupers, he makes a general statement based upon the observation of an indefinite number of individual immigrants. If he has known only three instances, his generalization is not sound. If he has known several hundred his generalization may be sound. But suppose the several hundred he has known are admitted to be the very worst type of immigrants. Then his generalization is less credible, for the instances observed are not typical,—they are not fair samples of illiterate immigrants. To test a generalization, let the debater ask: (1) Has the witness observed enough instances? (2) Has he observed typical instances?

b. Argument from causal relationship. This is the most common form of argument. If one passes along a road, and finds the trees broken, houses and barns blown down, men and horses lying dead, destruction and devastation on all sides, he immediately concludes that some form of terrific windstorm has swept through that section. He sees the effect, and reasons back to



the cause. On the other hand, suppose he sees rapidly approaching him a cloud of peculiar shape and size, having a strangely ominous appearance. He recognizes it as a cyclone cloud, and reasons that if he is in the path of the storm, the havoc caused by it may injure him. He knows the cause and reasons to the effect. Simple as this reasoning seems, it is nevertheless one of the most difficult forms to handle. A man who argues that the panic of a certain year was the result of an agitation for free silver during the previous year, argues on the causal relationship; but he is fallacious, forgetting that most effects are the results not of one, but of many contributing causes. When, therefore, one finds himself tempted to use an argument from causal relation, let him ask: 1. Is the cause assigned sufficient to produce the alleged results? 2. Are there any other contributing causes? 3. Are there any causes at work likely to produce opposite results?

c. Argument from resemblance. Lincoln used the argument from analogy when he said to those who were urging more active measures in prosecuting the Civil war:

"Gentlemen, suppose that all the property you were worth was in gold and you put it in the hands of Blondin, the famous rope-walker, to carry it across the Niagara Falls on a tight rope. Would you shake the rope while he was passing over it, or keep shouting to him, 'Blondin, stoop a little more. Go a little faster.' No. I am sure you would not. You would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hand off until he was safely over. Now, the government is in the same situation. It is carrying an immense weight across a stormy ocean. Untold treasures are in its hands. It is doing the best it can. Don't badger it. Just keep still and it will get you safely over."

In this case it will be noticed that the analogy does not prove, it merely illustrates; but it makes the reasoning extremely convincing. Frequently one hears "Municipal Ownership was successful in Glasgow—why not in our city?" or "Compulsory arbitration is successful in New Zealand, why not in the United States? These are attempts to use the argument from resemblance. Now the value of such a statement depends first upon proof that compulsory arbitration actually was successful in New Zealand. But secondly, upon the *similarity of conditions* between *New Zealand* and the *United States*. A skillful debater will point out two vital differences in condition, which render it extremely doubtful, whether compulsory arbitration, even if suc-

cessful in New Zealand, would be equally effective in the United States. In the first place, New Zealand has less than 1,000,000 inhabitants, the United States nearly 90,000,000. But secondly, and more important, in New Zealand, the labor unions are compelled to incorporate, thus making them amenable to legal methods; in the United States, the unions not being incorporated, have no legal existence, and therefore, it is impossible to enforce decrees of arbitration boards. In short to test an argument for resemblance, ask

(1) Are the general conditions similar? (2) Is there dissimilarity in any essential particular?

### **3rd. How to Detect Errors in Reasoning**

In the valuation of evidence one must constantly be on guard against erroneous reasoning. An unsound mode of arguing, which seems convincing, but really is not, is called a fallacy. If the young debater will memorize the following list of the most common fallacies, and will diligently examine both his own argument, and that of his opponent, to detect errors which resemble the illustrations given below, he will go far toward protecting himself against unsound reasoning.

#### **a. Fallacies:**

1. Hasty generalization.
2. False analogy.
3. Non-casual relationship.
4. Begging the question.
  - a. Arguing in a circle.
  - b. Assertion.
  - c. Arguing from ambiguous evidence.
5. Ignoring the question.
  - a. Beside the point.
  - b. Shifting ground.
  - c. Part to whole.
  - d. Objections.

#### **Tests:**

- a. Hasty Generalization. (see page 30)

Tests (a) Have enough instances been examined?

(b) Are the instances typical ones?

- b. False Analogy. (see page 31)

Tests (a) Are the general conditions similar?

(b) Is there dissimilarity in any essential particular?

c. Causal Relationship. (see page 30)

Tests (a) Was the cause assigned sufficient to produce the result?

(b) Were there other contributing causes?

(c) Are there any causes likely to produce opposite results?

d. Begging the question.

The three most important forms of the fallacy "Begging the Question," may be distinguished as follows:

a. *Arguing in a circle.* In this fallacy the debater assumes as true without presenting any proof, a point which is equivalent to the conclusion he wishes to reach. For example, a student trying to prove that Mr. Kipling was not a great poet said, "Many of the poems are in grossly bad taste, for they are so condemned by critics of refinement, inasmuch as if they do not condemn them, they cannot be called men of refinement." Another example follows: "A literacy test will raise the standard of immigration, for ability to read and write elevates the standard of men and women." In this argument the student assumes the last clause as true,—yet this last clause is exactly what he must prove to win his case.

Test: Does the argument present any statement as proof which is practically the same as the proposition to be proved?

b. *Assertion.* This is by far the most simple and common form of fallacy. By assertion is meant the mere statement that something is true, which needs to be proved true. We should remember that nothing is true, simply because someone says that it is true. For instance, the newspapers are full of assertions; simply to see a statement in print conveys no assurance of its truth. For example, one who tries to prove the Swiss are good bowmen, by saying that William Tell shot the apple from his son's head, is making an assertion. Other examples taken from students' papers follow;

"All illiterate immigrants have vicious tendencies."

"The free silver agitation was the cause of the panic."

"Lack of patriotism in the United States causes difficulty in recruiting the army."

Test: What right have I to take this man's unsupported statement? Should he not support his mere statement with definite proof?

c. *Arguing from doubtful evidence.* Frequently a careless reasoner will present evidence which may be open to several

interpretations. For example: "I heard him say, 'That scoundrel of a D—— has been communicating plans.' Dreyfus' name begins with D. He is under suspicion. Therefore, Dreyfus communicated the plan." Another example: "The slum districts of the city of X—— are crowded full of ignorant foreigners. This proves that illiterate immigrants crowd the low centers of our cities."

Test: Even if the evidence presented is true, may it not have another meaning?

e. The four most common forms of fallacy in "Ignoring the Question" may be distinguished as follows;

a. *Beside the point.* A reasoner is guilty of this fallacy when he talks not upon the real question, but upon some side issue. When the essential issue in the immigration question is found to be the effect which swarms of illiterates will have on criminality in the United States, it is beside the point to speak of the need for laborers in agricultural districts.

Test: Does the evidence of the argument prove the essential point at issue?

b. *Shifting ground.* The fallacy is made when a debater being dislodged from one position, calmly takes another, and then another. For example, a student arguing in favor of the incorporations of labor unions argued first that incorporation would benefit the unions themselves; being driven from this stand by his opponent, he argued that incorporation would benefit the employers' associations; finally, being compelled to yield on this also, he triumphantly closed the debate by maintaining that incorporation of labor unions would benefit the general public. The skillful debater will not allow an opponent to fly from point to point. He will hold him to the essentials.

Test: (a) Is the opponent talking on the essential issues?

(b) Does he hold firmly to one point of view?

c. *Arguing from part to the whole.* It must constantly be borne in mind that what is true of a part may not be true of the whole. For instance, it would be very easy to cite many individual cases of illiterate immigrants who became industrious citizens; but because a small percentage of them are valuable citizens, does not prove the same desirability for the majority. Again in arguing for the "Consolidated system of township schools"—a student having shown that the conveyance of pupils was practicable in many counties of the state, was surprised to

find his opponent proving that in certain hilly countries near the Mississippi river, such conveyance would be impracticable.

Test: (a) Does the evidence cover only a part?

(b) Is this part typical of the whole?

*d. Objections.* Merely to raise objections to a plan is not conclusive argument against it. It is obvious that any debatable question will have two sides. Therefore, when any new line of procedure is suggested it is easy enough to point out objections, often many of them. In almost every question, the decision must rest on not absolute—this is right—and this is wrong—but which is better, which is worse? For example one may argue against the literacy test, that it is un-American in principle; that it is a radical departure from our customs; that it is unfair to certain classes oppressed in their native land—these and many other objections may be raised. But the skillful debater will hold his opponent carefully to the essential issues, even granting that certain objections must be counted against him.

Test: (a) Do the objections bear upon an important issue?

(b) Do the disadvantages outweigh the advantages?

### **3. HOW TO MEET YOUR OPPONENT'S ARGUMENTS: REFUTATION**

In the preparation of a debate it is of the greatest importance to be prepared to meet the vital points in the argument of the opponent. A very common error among young debaters is to ignore the case of the other man. When not confronted by an adversary on the same platform, it is easy even for an experienced public speaker to forget that many people in his audience have in mind certain objections to his arguments. Let the debater constantly repeat to himself these queries: What has my opponent said on this point? What can he say? What question will my thoughtful hearers naturally ask about my argument? How can I surmount this difficulty? Remember that the debater, or any other public speaker, is endeavoring to present the truth to other men, whose opinions and judgments, and even prejudices, he must respect.

#### **1st. What to Refute**

One cannot meet all the arguments advanced on the other side. He must, therefore, determine what are the essential points made against him and strike hard at them. Here again if the debater has analyzed his question well his task is comparatively simple.

Answer the opposing arguments which bear upon the special issues. Ignore all other arguments. Suppose one is debating the literacy test for immigration. By careful analysis he has found that the vital issues are those enumerated above on page 21. Affirmative opponent argues that the volume of immigration has increased with enormous rapidity. This argument can well be ignored by the negative, except in so far as it has been argued that American labor is interfered with. Or the negative argues that steamship companies are largely at fault in urging ignorant foreigners to come to America. This argument, bearing on none of the special issues, may be ignored entirely by the affirmative. If, however, evidence is presented indicating that illiterate immigrants show an alarming tendency to become criminals or paupers, the negative must not fail to reply. Suppose that the negative should convince the judges that more laborers are needed, that the American ideal welcomes the oppressed, that a literacy test is not entirely effective, that all foreigners assimilate readily; but that it fails entirely to meet the point emphasized by opponents, that illiterate immigrants become criminals. In such a case the decision is likely to go to the affirmative.

## **2nd. Where to Place Refutation**

Nothing is so fatal to good refutation as a memorized speech. One must cultivate the power of changing the order of presentation, of shifting his case to meet emergencies that arise, on the spur of the moment. Certain portions of one's prepared speech may well be omitted, others must be emphasized, others treated hastily, according to the plan of attack made by opponent. Rebuttal needs to be placed at the opening of a debate when a man is in favor of some new and untried idea. He must anticipate the objections which he knows are in the mind of his audience. An advocate of private ownership must very early in his debate dispel the fear that there are grave dangers of high cost and poor service in private ownership. It is well to leave a strong argument of an opponent for the end of one's debate, if it is certain that one can demolish it. The futility of making a weak answer to a strong argument late in the debate is too obvious to need discussion.

Opportunities for rebuttal. The following list of questions, drawn up by Professor Baker of Harvard College, will furnish opportunity for rebuttal.

1. Is the testimony of witness inconsistent with human experience, with known facts in the case, or with itself?

2. Is there anything in the conditions under which a witness testifies which renders his evidence suspicious?
3. Is the witness incompetent to testify because of prejudice or moral, physical, or mental weakness?
4. Is your opponent's reasoning based on faulty observations?
5. Has he assumed the truth of a premise which you have authority to disprove?
6. Has your opponent ignored the real issues?
7. Are his generalizations sound? Are the instances observed too few? Are they fair instances?
8. Has your opponent used as cause, something which is merely a coincidence or an attendant circumstance?
9. Has your opponent relied on a cause inadequate to produce the result alleged?
10. Are there other contributing causes?
11. Can you detect any other fallacious reasoning?

### **3rd. How to Emphasize Refutation**

This does not mean vociferous vocalization or violent gesticulation, which too frequently pass for emphasis. Emphasis in rebuttal means the handling of one's evidence in such a way as to prove that it is more worthy of belief than is the evidence of one's opponent. Never confront one witness by another, unless you explain how your witness is more valuable than your opponent's. Again, make the significance of each portion of your argument very plain. Show how your constructive argument defeats the essential points which have been advanced against you.

In emphasizing his point that there was a mutual understanding among various democratic leaders, culminating in the Dred Scott decision, Lincoln said:

"We cannot say that all these exact adaptations are the result of preconcert. But, when we see a lot of framed timbers—different portions of which we know have been gotten out at different times and places and by different workmen, Stephen, Franklin, and James for instance, and when we see these timbers joined together and see that they exactly make the frame of a house or a mill \* \* \* ; in such a case we find it impossible not to believe that those four workmen all understood one another from the beginning, and all worked on a common draft or plan drawn up before the first blow was struck."

#### 4th. Special Methods of Refutation

There are four special kinds of rebuttal which a young debater ought to be able to use. a. *Reductio ad absurdum*. b. Enforcing the consequences. c. The dilemma. d. Residues.

a. *Reductio ad absurdum*. This as the name signifies is to show an absurdity in your opponent's argument. The following examples illustrate its use.

When arguing the question of secession, Daniel Webster maintained that if the doctrine of secession were correct, a customs officer in any southern port, say Charleston, would be hanged no matter what policy he pursued. If he collected duties he would be hanged by the state authorities; if he failed to collect, he would be hanged by the federal authorities.

b. *Enforcing the consequences*. A most effective way of disposing of an opponent's case, is to carry his program out to its logical conclusions, showing that the results would be disastrous.

Carl Schurz replies in the following manner to a Mr. Miles Lewis Peck, who had written him a letter saying, "Conditions here seem very unsatisfactory to you, Mr. Schurz. I wonder you do not return to your native land. That I think is the best way for those who do not like the views of the rulers of this country, the voters." Mr. Schurz replies, "The rule you lay down is unreasonable. In justice you will have to apply it, as well as to me, to all other persons in the same predicament. You will then, supposing you to be in the majority, send all those who differ from you politically, out of the country, \* \* \* but it is probable that the remaining majority would also divide into parties. You, being always of the majority party, would then, according to your rule, read the new minority party out of the country. Now you see that this operation, many times repeated, might at last leave Mr. Miles Lewis Peck, on the ground, lonesome and forlorn, in desolate self-appreciation".

c. *The dilemma*. In this method of refutation a debater shows that his opponent's case has only two alternatives, neither of which holds true. For example Lincoln used a perfect dilemma in his debates with Douglas. Douglas professed to advocate both Squatter Sovereignty and the Dred Scott Decision. The doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty meant that the people of any territory could decide for themselves whether they would admit or exclude slavery. The Dred Scott Decision meant that a slaveholder could claim his slave in any territory. Lincoln saw the inconsistency and asked Douglas this question, "Can the



people of a territory, prior to the formation of a state constitution, in any lawful way exclude slavery?" This question produced a perfect dilemma. If Douglas answered the question "Yes," he would repudiate the Dred Scott Decision and offend the South. If he answered it, "No," he would repudiate the doctrine of Squatter Sovereignty and offend the North. Douglas saw his difficulty, and in endeavoring to avoid it, uttered what is known as the Freeport heresy. He said that the people of the territory could not exclude slavery, but that by unfriendly legislation they could make it impossible for slavery to remain. Lincoln emphasized the inconsistency by showing that Douglas' reply meant that slavery could lawfully be excluded from a place where it had a lawful right to be.

d. *Residues*. This method of refutation is used when the debater reduces the case to a definite number of alternatives, then taking them up one at a time shows that each is impracticable. Burke uses this method as follows " \* \* \* \* as far as I am capable of discerning there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit which prevails in your colonies and disturbs your government. These are, to change the spirit by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal, or to comply with it as necessary." Burke then shows that the first two alternatives cannot hold, and continues, " \* \* if then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be impracticable, if the idea of criminal process be inapplicable, what yet remains? No way is open but the last, to comply with the American spirit as necessary, or if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil."

## C. CONCLUSION

Having discussed at some length the first two divisions of a good argument, the introduction and the argument proper, it remains to discuss briefly the conclusion. Any well constructed public address should place, at the close, the strongest ideas in a vigorous emphatic manner. Therefore, let the debater present a summary of the main propositions in his argument proper—showing exactly what ground he has been trying to cover. The relation of the conclusion to the other divisions of the argument may be suggested as follows, supposing each of the issues found in the immigration question (page 21), is covered:

- A. Introduction resulting in issues.
  - 1. Have illiterate immigrants dangerous criminal tendencies?
  - 2. Do they lower the American standard of living, etc.?
- B. Argument proper, presenting proof of the propositions.
  - 1. Illiterate immigrants have dangerous criminal tendencies.
  - 2. They tend materially to lower the American standard of living, etc.
- C. Conclusion. Recapitulating the argument we find that the literacy test should be applied because
  - 1. Illiterate immigrants are threatening us with criminality.
  - 2. They seriously lower the American standard of living, etc.

## IV. PRINCIPLES OF DELIVERY

Having spoken of analysis, evidence and rebuttal, it now remains to discuss briefly the fourth essential of good debating, presentation, and we offer to young debaters the following suggestions.

### 1. VOICE

The voice is the most important organ used in public address. Let it be mellow, flexible, forceful, then it will be pleasing. It is very important to be able to hear one's own voice, and to determine not to inflict upon any hearers sounds which would be distressing to one's self if they came from another. Few people have opportunity for extended voice training under competent teachers. However, when listening to a speaker, one will often notice one's own brows contracting, the throat becoming parched, the muscles tightening, and other symptoms of nervous tension. Try to determine what characteristics of the speaker produce this nervous state. Acting upon the suggestions that will be received in this manner, much can be done by a simple determination to have a pleasing voice, and by constant, careful effort to attain it.\*

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\*A University bulletin on *Voice Production* will be mailed to any address in the state on request.

## 2. GESTURES AND POSTURES

Let your gestures be few and simple. Avoid stamping the floor, or pounding the table. Stand quietly upon the platform; be self-possessed, but not over-confident. A restless shifting of weight from foot to foot, a nervous fumbling with watch chain or vest pocket, a steady swaying of the body, a constantly repeated gesture—all should be avoided. Make your audience feel at ease, because of your own easy bearing. Frequently boys in public speaking classes ask, "May I put my hand in my pocket? May I lean on the table?" etc. An instructor replies, "You may do anything on the platform that a gentleman would do in the presence of ladies and gentlemen. In fact you may do anything which does not attract the attention of the audience from what you are saying, and to the manner in which you are saying it." In a word, stand firmly on both feet, and let hands and body and face help you talk, just as they please; with the single provision that you do not make your hearers conscious of your gesticulation. A good speaker, who may have used fifty gestures during his address, at its close may feel sure that he did not gesture at all.

## 3. SPEAKING NOT TALKING

Some one has said that the ideal orator is a man talking in a room to two or three friends. To a certain extent this is true. But speaking is more than talking. A speaker rises to his task. He is, for the time being, a leader of men. He knows or is supposed to know, more about his subject than do his hearers. He energizes his words, puts power into his delivery. Color and feeling creep into his voice. His own emotions find expression in his oratory, every nerve alert, and every faculty of mind and body ready for use. A good speaker judges the size of his audience, the acoustics of his room, and adapts himself to them. He never overreaches—has always a reserve power, giving the impression that he could, if necessary, be much more powerful. In short, throw yourself into your work, stamp your own personality upon your thoughts, be a man, the servant of an idea, are injunctions which the good speaker must never forget.

And now in closing, we wish to urge two things upon all young debaters. First, never miss an opportunity to get upon our feet and try to talk. Do not fail to identify yourself with debating organization. If you have none in your city, get to-

gether a half dozen fellows and form one. The best way to learn to speak is to speak—speak—speak. Second, form the habit of noticing how successful public speakers accomplish their results. Begin with your local preachers, lawyers, congressmen; notice their voices, their gestures, their position, their feeling—all the elements of good delivery; and even more important, watch their analysis, evidence, and refutation, keeping in mind all the principles which have been briefly treated in this bulletin.

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